

# Key Messages

## Charter 2020: Principles for Mental Health Reform

- The Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health provides an excellent opportunity for governments to act on mental health reform.
- We know what to do. There is strong consensus across the mental health and suicide prevention sectors on the nine principles outlined in Charter 2020.
- We need a national agreement for mental health to provide integration and accountability.

### STRIKE A NEW NATIONAL AGREEMENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH

An agreement that delivers integration and coordination of mental health services, including agreed objectives, indicators, monitoring arrangements and funding between all levels of government.

Critical to this agreement is:

- Improved accountability, coordination and transparency through clarity of governance and funding responsibilities across Commonwealth and state and territory governments.
- Improved data collection to support accountability, effective funding arrangements, and monitoring of outcomes.
- Targeted actions for the most vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by mental health issues.

### BUILD A MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM THAT IS TRULY PERSON-LED

A system centred on what people with lived experience of mental health issues and their carers say they need, including the structures and processes required to ensure co-design of services and programs.

- A mental health system that meets the needs of our diverse communities is one that is co-designed by our communities.
- Consumer and carer involvement in policy, service design, delivery and governance is essential.

### ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Eliminate stigma and discrimination and address the social and environmental determinants of poor mental health including housing, employment, trauma, physical health, income support, and environment.

- There is evidence that particular experiences and social circumstances can trigger and/or perpetuate mental health issues, including housing instability and homelessness, trauma, relationship stress, stigma and discrimination (among others).



- Holistic, tailored mental health care that tackles the root causes of mental health issues is critical for the mental wellbeing of Australians.
- The root causes of mental health issues transcend the health sector, and Australia's mental health is the responsibility of all sectors and all levels of government.

### INVEST IN EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

Programs and supports that intervene early to prevent people from becoming mentally ill and stop emerging mental illnesses from becoming more severe.

- Early intervention and prevention is a cost-effective, long-term investment into Australia's mental health in 20 years' time.
- Early intervention should not be limited to the early years of life, but rather should occur across the lifespan.
- Awareness campaigns and the promotion of mental health are critical forms of prevention.

### FUND INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING, AND SUICIDE PREVENTION ACCORDING TO NEED

Including dedicated strategic responses co-designed and co-implemented with Indigenous leaders, consumers and communities. This should be guided by the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy 2013, and the Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration.

- Indigenous leadership is essential to promote the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. This goes beyond co-design with Indigenous people, and includes funding of Aboriginal organisations to autonomously design, develop and implement services that meet the needs of their people.
- All proposed policy, system and practice changes across the full spectrum of mental health and suicide prevention should be considered in terms of their effect on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
- The vastly disproportionate impact of child and youth suicide in Aboriginal communities demonstrates a need for investment in community-led solutions.
- Solutions that promote Indigenous people's connection to culture are essential, alongside culturally safe clinical services.

### PROVIDE INTEGRATED, COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Full suites of services and programs required to support mental health and ensure intensive, team based and integrated care is available for all those experiencing a mental health crisis, and addressing the needs of people who have traditionally missed out, such as culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTIQ+ populations, and people living with intellectual disability.

- Australia's mental health system requires a clear architecture that is adaptable to local circumstances.



- The fragmented nature of the current system has created large gaps through which many Australians are falling. There is a 'missing middle' between primary care and crisis support.
- An integrated, comprehensive support system is needed to support continuity of care, and streamline consumer care pathways.

### EXPAND COMMUNITY BASED MENTAL HEALTH CARE

**Ensure there are psychosocial programs and team based care options to provide community based care and to avoid hospitalisation wherever possible.**

- Australia is capable of a world class community mental health system that is supported by two tiers of government.
- The lack of community based mental health services across the country is leading people into crisis responses, with many Australians relying on emergency services for support.
- Expansion of Australia's community based mental health services will ensure that all Australians receive the right care, in the right time, in the right place across metropolitan, regional and rural locations.

### SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Invest in systematic workforce development, including peer workers, volunteers, paid and unpaid carers, community workers and clinicians.**

Australia needs a National Mental Health Workforce Strategy that is developed in consultation with and agreed with the sector. Critical to this strategy is consideration of:

- Australia's rapidly growing peer support workforce.
- the physical and emotional safety parameters required to enable safe and productive working environments for staff across the mental health workforce.
- funding arrangements which attract mental health workforce to grow in regional and remote areas and to work with harder to reach people, such as those experiencing homelessness.
- the impact of short-term and individualised funding arrangements on workforce stability and job security.
- new data collection requirements to enable the community mental health sector to be better accounted for in workforce planning.

### BUILD AN EVIDENCE BASED, ACCOUNTABLE AND RESPONSIVE SYSTEM

**Ensure constant research and evaluation, transparent monitoring of prevalence, availability of services and programs, system performance and gaps. Ensure targeted and timely response to identified gaps, system failures and poor performance.**

There is a need for:

- More formal evaluation requirements and independent monitoring of outcomes, specifically against the Fifth National Mental Health Plan.



- A centralised Mental Health Outcomes Framework for community-based and clinical mental health services that measures outcomes across the social determinants for mental health.
- Formalised and consistent allocation of evaluation funding for all pilot programs to monitor program outcomes, improve accountability, and contribute to the country's evidence base of effective mental health interventions.

